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C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (PARA 4 CLASS MARKING)

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E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/16/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IS](#) [LE](#) [NO](#)  
SUBJECT: NORWAY WILL SUPPORT UNIFIL

REF: A. STATE 134133

- [1](#)B. OSLO 1014
- [1](#)C. OSLO 909

Classified By: P/E Counselor Kristen Bauer, reasons 1.4 (b), (d)

[1](#)1. (U) SUMMARY: Pol Counselor delivered Reftel A demarche on UNIFIL contributions on 16 August to the Norwegian MFA's Head of the Middle East Section, Kaare Eltervaag. He stated that the political will is strong for Norway to support with mission with military forces, but the resources do not allow for a significant (even by Norwegian standards) force to be sent. Consistent with what has been discussed with other members of government (reftel OSLO 1014), he said that Norway would like to contribute maritime forces and perhaps the expertise of a small number of specialists (officer level). He noted that Norway has 20 years of experience in South Lebanon, and that the Middle East in general holds a high interest for the current government. END SUMMARY

[1](#)2. (C) Eltervaag raised several concerns regarding the possible military contributions to Lebanon. One is that other countries (specifically Sweden - see Reftel B) are also considering maritime contributions and there is simply not a large need for resources in this area. He noted that there may be particular interest in offering maritime resources because they are less likely to be in harm's way. Another concern he voiced is that there may be members of the current government from the Socialist Left who may complicate the debate; he believes that they may argue that contributions to Lebanon (which they support) should be taken out of the existing deployments to Afghanistan (which they do not support). He says that ground soldiers (combat troops) will most likely not be offered as a possible contribution from Norway.

[1](#)3. (SBU) Although the Prime Minister does have the theoretical ability to make the final decision on military contributions and deployment, the reality is that the final package will require the support of at least half of the parliament. The discussion of whether and how to support a UN force in the region has been going on in the media for weeks (Reftel C).

[1](#)4. (C) COMMENT: Although the government does have a majority, the presence of the Socialist Left in the government could lead to a very public debate on the nature of the contribution. The GON has made it clear that they are stretched thin militarily, and this request for contributions may open the door for the Socialist Left to revive the discussion of Afghanistan. END COMMENT  
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